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What Are We, Then?

By Minos Fel'Kona as transcribed by Morrie Mullins

The following text was found on a datapad left in the Hedrett Groundsport several days ago. The datapad -- identified as belonging to Jedi Master Minos Fel'Kona -- subsequently had its contents uploaded to Cularin's holonet for all to see. Which, as the text makes clear, is more than a little ironic.

Some small amount of commentary has arisen around the datapad and the thoughts contained therein. The question that most people seem to be asking, though, is simply this: Where is Master Fel'Kona?

It's odd, the cycles we go through. When I was a boy, I remember so many other children carrying around personal datapads that they would scribble on whenever they felt the urge. These diaries were personal, private -- a way for the individual to try to set his thoughts in order, to deal more effectively with the world.

Now, everyone posts his thoughts to the holonet. Everyone seems to be laboring under the illusion that what he has to say should matter to everyone else. All it does is create noise, which obscures not only the person's thoughts (valid and important though they may be) but also the thoughts of every other being struggling to be heard.

Which makes it odd, I suppose, that I have taken to keeping this log of my own. It's not for anyone else, just for me, but I find myself writing as if I had an audience. It's a conceit of our culture, I suppose. We all have an imaginary audience, a clamor of voices in our minds that tell us that what we have to say is important, is worth being heard or read. I'm not so sure anything I've ever had to say was worthy of either. I'm a man. Nothing more. That I have worn Jedi robes most of my life, that I wield a lightsaber, doesn't change that my skin singes just as quickly when exposed to flame as anyone else's might, doesn't change that I sometimes wonder what is to become of us all, in the wake of recent events.

The Jedi Temple on Coruscant, burning. That's hard for me to believe. For the first time in my life, I find myself seriously considering the option of hiding. So many have died. The Council, decimated, a message sent to stay away, lest we fall to someone called Darth Vader. Our own leadership in Cularin, gone. Sometimes I wake in the middle of the night and stare at the ceiling and wonder if it might all have been a dream. A horrible, empty dream, where hope faded like a slow-dying star.

It isn't, though. The Jedi are being hunted, declared enemies of the Republic we have served all our lives. I've never been an enemy of the Republic, though, nor has any other Jedi I've known. We may be enemies of

Palpatine - - he has declared us as such, so there's not much we can do about that - - but the man is not the Republic. Cannot be, if the Republic exists in more than name. Of course, it doesn't. Palpatine has created what he calls the First Galactic Empire, which I suppose makes him the first galactic Emperor. I didn't need an empire, or an emperor. I didn't need to hear that the individuals who led the Jedi had been named traitors, accused of attempting to overthrow a legitimate government, when no legitimate government could exist under the rule of someone who would consort with the Sith.

All of which forces me to ask the question I've been leading up to: If we are not the protectors of the Republic (and Palpatine says we are not, and there is some question of whether there is even a Republic to protect any longer), and we are not enemies of the Republic (many of our number fought and died in the Clone Wars against a Separatist army bent on destroying what we swore to protect), what are we?

It's not an easy question. The two options, had you asked me a year ago, seemed mutually exclusive and virtually exhaustive. Semantically, I suppose it's possible that with our order being declared enemies of the Empire, if we were to strive to restore the Republic to its former glory, we could be both its protector and its enemy. Or protector of one, and enemy of the other, though in their form they seem close to identical. The Senate still exists. It's just not clear what power it will retain under Palpatine and his armies. The leadership defines the galaxy. With Palpatine as leader of the Empire - - or whatever he considers himself to be leading this week - - we are its enemy. We are rebels.

That does not - - cannot - - change our responsibility. The people of the galaxy need to be protected. The galaxy itself needs to be protected.

But how? There is only so much that can be done from here in Cularin, and I have to wonder whether it's wise for us to do anything at all. Aside from a few incidents on Coruscant, most of our citizens have managed to stay beneath the notice of Palpatine and his ilk. Not completely, though. And Senator Wren - - may the Force be with her - - took her crusade for our protection to the highest levels, meaning that Palpatine cannot help but be aware of who we are and what we stand for.

To say nothing of the fact that Cularin has one of the highest concentrations of Jedi remaining in the galaxy.

Which brings us to the matter of Palpatine's pet, this Vader. I'm not sure which of the rumors about him to believe. That he's dangerous, there can be no doubt. Grievous was dangerous as well. The Jedi-killer droid, which sounds more and more like Grievous, was dangerous. Cularin has dealt with dangerous for quite some time. The fact that we've not yet received a visitation from any of Palpatine's troops tells me that he may have some other plan for us, or that such a plan may already be ongoing. That is enough to unnerve almost anyone.

It's not fear. At least, I don't think it is. I've meditated on it a great deal, when I wasn't out searching for Academy survivors, and I don't believe I'm afraid. What I am is uncertain. Uncertain and uneasy. Uncertain of the proper course of action to take. Uncertain of the proper time to take action. Uncertain whether it's better to remain in Cularin, to protect our

adopted home from whatever may come, or better to leave, to draw attention away from a good and innocent people who I am certain would sooner die than accept the rule of an unjust leader. Many already have died -- too many by far. I am uneasy because this is not a decision I would have ever anticipated needing to make, because the changing nature of power on Coruscant is not something any of our order foresaw. We were blinded to the truth. Now, those of us who remain are blinded as to the right course of action.

The reports I've heard from those who were able to escape the clone armies is that one moment the battles were being waged as usual, and the next, clone commanders turned on their Jedi leaders. The clones were tools. The Jedi were tools. We were all used, in one way or another, to put Palpatine into the position he's in.

This is why I pause. The next move, which should be clear, isn't. I know there are yet Jedi in the galaxy, and I understand that Vader is hunting us down. I go back and forth -- should we go after him, or should we stay away from him? Which does Palpatine want us to do?

For all the maneuvering it took to get him where he is -- to take him from being a Senator from a small system, to Supreme Chancellor, to Emperor of the galaxy -- he must have foreseen that some Jedi would survive the initial attempt to set us up as enemies of the galaxy. (I do not now, nor will I ever, believe that the Jedi Council acted in any way contrary to the best interests of the galaxy. Which means that Palpatine did, and that he somehow managed to outmaneuver Masters Windu, Yoda, Tiin, Fisto, Kenobi and all the others who have been lost to us.) If he did this, there is little chance that he failed to account for what would come after he succeeded. He must already have plans in place to deal with an offensive against him. To say nothing of the clone army at his disposal. So it might be the ultimate foolish act to attempt to stop him or his servant, Vader.

On the other hand, he has to know that we would consider this. His planning would take into account the fact that when the Jedi Council was destroyed, the remaining Jedi would assume that resistance would be futile, and slink away to the Outer Rim. So maybe he's just counting on his existing forces to defend him and won't expect a targeted strike.

I think I could talk myself in circles for hours. The simple solution? It isn't. We need to figure out what Palpatine expects us to do, and then do the opposite. But the one thing we cannot do is remain in Cularin. The more I think about it, the more convinced I become. If there is one place he would send Vader to look for us, it's here. As soon as I can, I will take every Jedi I can find, and we will leave.

Maybe, one day in the future, we can discover what it means to be a Jedi in the Empire. Or better still, we can rediscover what it means to be a Jedi in the Republic.